

Unilever to begin Cuba operations in 2017

HAVANA - Dutch food and cosmetics giant Unilever will begin operations in Cuba in 2017 after communist officials authorized a joint venture with state firm Intersuchel, they said Monday.



Employees test margarine at Unilever's headquarters in Rotterdam
Image source: [AFP](#)

Photographer: John Thys

The new company, Unilever-Suchel SA, received the backing of the government of President Raul Castro to build a plant in the mega port of Mariel, 45 kilometers (30 miles) west of the capital Havana, with an investment of about \$35 million.

"We are happy and we hope that Dutch companies will come and work with the Cuban side," said Dutch Deputy Foreign Minister Lilianne Ploumen, in remarks broadcast by the state news agency Prensa Latina.

Ploumen was in Cuba to cement trade links, accompanied by major companies also including Philips and Heineken.

The trip comes hot on the heels of a German trade visit to Cuba, as relations between Havana and the West continue to thaw.

Unilever will hold a 60 percent stake in the new joint venture, according to executives quoted by the official press. Nine foreign companies are now approved by Cuba to settle in the free zone of Mariel, some of them in partnership with the Cuban state.

Source: AFP